

Message Text

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ACTION SIL-01

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00
EB-08 INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 AID-05
HA-05 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AGRE-00 /106 W
-----087088 061954Z /46 40

R 061150Z JAN 78
FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7120
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMCONSUL DURBAN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 JOHANNESBURG 0032

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS AFL-CIO

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PLAB, SF, GW, US
SUBJ: INTERNATIONAL METAL WORKERS FEDERATION VISIT

REF: (A) 77 BONN 21530, (B) 77 BONN 21333, (C) 77 PRETORIA 7093

1. SUMMARY: A DELEGATION FROM 13 MILLION STRONG INTERNATIONAL METALWORKERS FEDERATION (IMF), INCLUDING PROMINENT AMERICAN AND GERMAN TRADE UNIONISTS, IS CURRENTLY IN SOUTH AFRICA. THE VISIT IS WELCOMED BY SOUTH AFRICANS WHO ARE SUFFERING FROM INCREASING ISOLATION FROM THE INTERNATIONAL FREE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT. THE PURPOSE OF THE VISIT IS TO EXPLORE HOW BEST TO ASSIST BLACK TRADE UNIONISTS AND ENCOURAGE MOVMENT AWAY FROM DISCRIMINATION. MEMBERS OF THE
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DELEGATION ARE AWARE OF THE PITFALLS INHERENT IN THEIR VISIT, I.E. ATTEMPTS BY THE SAG TO CLAIM APPROVAL FOR ITS SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT POLICIES. THEY BLIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT THE NEED FOR FIRST-HAND KNOWLEDGE AND THE CURRENT PROSPECTS FOR ENCOURAGING THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE UNIONISM AMONG BLACKS OUTWEIGH THE RISKS INVOLVED. THE IMF WILL BE ALERT TO OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENFORCING THE APPLICATION OF THE EC CODE OF EMPLOYMENT

PRACTICE WHICH STRESSES TRADE UNION RIGHTS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE IMF DELEGATION WAS MET ON ARRIVAL ON JANUARY 3 BY THE REGIONAL LABOR OFFICER, THE GERMAN CHARGE, REPRESENTATIVES OF SOUTH AFRICAN WHITE TRADE UNION AFFILIATES AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN AND GERMAN PRESS. THE DELEGATION INCLUDES EUGEN LODERER, PRESIDENT OF IMF AND GERMAN AFFILIATE I.G. METAL AND MEMBER OF SUPERVISORY BOARD OF VOLKSWAGEN; HANS MAYER, VICE PRESIDENT OF I.G. METAL; HERMAN REBHAN (AMERICAN), GENERAL SECRETARY OF IMF; FERDINAND TUREK, PRESIDENT OF SIEMANS WORKS COUNCIL; AND ALBERT SCHUNK, SECRETARY TO LODERER. THE GENEVA BASED IMF IS ONE OF THE LARGEST AND MOST ACTIVE INTERNATIONAL TRADE SECRETARIATS. U.S. AFFILIATES INCLUDE THE UAW, STEELWORKERS, MACHINISTS, ELECTRICAL, RADIO AND MACHINE WORKERS (IUE), BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS (IBEW) AND MACHINE AND SHIPBUILDING WORKERS.

3. THIS EVENT IS REGARDED WITHIN SOUTH AFRICA AS THE MOST IMPORTANT VISIT SINCE THAT OF A TUC MISSION FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM IN 1973. PROGRAM COORDINATION IS BY BRIAN FREDRICKS (COLORED), WHO IS SECRETARY OF THE MULTI-RACIAL SOUTH AFRICAN IMF COORDINATING COUNCIL AND AN OFFICIAL OF THE NATIONAL UNION OF MOTOR ASSEMBLY AND RUBBER WORKERS.

4. IN A PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH THE RLO AND THE BRITISH LABOR ATTACHE REBHAN SAID THE PURPOSE OF VISIT WAS TO EXPLORE WAYS
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OF FURTHER ASSISTING SA BLACK TRADE UNIONS. HE ADDED THAT THE IMF DOES NOT FAVOR THE BOYCOTT APPROACH OF THE ICFTU. IT DOES NOT HESITATE, HOWEVER, TO CRITICIZE PUBLICLY THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT AS IT DID OVER THE BANNINGS IN NOVEMBER 1976 OF MORE THAN 20 TRADE UNIONISTS. THE IMF STRATEGY IS TO ENCOURAGE FREE TRADE UNIONISM FOR ALL SOUTH AFRICANS AND THE DISMANTLING OF DIVISIONS AND RESTRICTIONS BASED ON RACE. RECENT IMF SUCCESS IN FOSTERING THE FORMATION OF THE MULTI-RACIAL SOUTH AFRICAN COORDINATING COUNCIL WAS ONE OF THE BASIC PREMISES FOR THE CURRENT VISIT.

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5. THE DELEGATION WILL MEET WITH THE REPRESENTATIVES OF BOTH REGISTERED (WHITE AND COLORED) AND UNREGISTERED (BLACK) TRADE UNIONS AND INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES, INCLUDING HARRY OPPENHEIMER, CHAIRMAN OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN CORPORATION. VISITS ARE SCHEDULED TO SIEMANS, VOLKSWAGEN, FORD, GENERAL MOTORS AND DAIMLER BENZ. THE ONLY GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE THE GROUP WILL MEET WILL BE NIC WIEHAHN, CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO LABOR LEGISLATION.

6. REBHAN EXPLAINED HE IS DELIBERATELY AVOIDING OTHER GOVERNMENT CONTACTS IN ORDER NOT RPT NOT TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE IMF APPROVES OF WHAT IS GOING ON IN SOUTH AFRICA. HE ADDED THE DELEGATION IS UNDER NO ILLUSIONS THAT THE SAG IS ABOUT TO DISMANTLE APARTHEID OR THE SYSTEM OF INFLUX CONTROLS. WHILE CONFIDENTIAL

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HE WILL URGE WIEHAHN TO FACILITATE THE RECOGNITION OF BLACK TRADE UNIONS, REBHAN IS CONCERNED, BASED ON EARLIER TALKS IN GENEVA, THAT WIEHAHN INTENDS TO UNDERCUT THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IN GENERAL BY CREATING A SYSTEM OF WORKS COUNCILS SIMILAR TO THE GERMANS.

7. IN REPLY TO A QUESTION REGARDING THE EC CODE OF EMPLOYMENT PRACTICE, REBHAN SAID IT WAS A GOOD STATEMENT OF INTENT, BUT THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO VERIFY WHETHER THE CODES' PRINCIPLES ARE

APPLIED. HE SAID THAT IMF AFFILIATES WERE PREPARING TO EXPOSE AND PUT PRESSURE ON FIRMS WHICH ARE LAX IN APPLYING THE EC CODE.

8. REGARDING THE ROLE WHICH U.S. TRADE UNIONS CAN PLAY IN SOUTH AFRICA, REBHAN SAID HE WAS VERY ENCOURAGED BY THE AFL-CIO INVITATION TO THREE BLACK TRADE UNIONISTS TO ATTEND THEIR CONVENTION IN LOS ANGELES. HE SAID THE NEXT STEP SHOULD BE A LOW-KEY EXPLORATORY VISIT BY SOMEONE SUCH AS PAT O'FARRELL OF THE AALC TO DETERMINE THE FEASIBILITY OF AN OFFICIAL AFL-CIO FACT FINDING MISSION. MUCH WOULD DEPEND, HOWEVER, ON THE OUTCOME OF THE WIEHAHN COMMISSION.
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